## Partnering Children with Dogs to Read --

Literacy Magic!

#### You Want to Do What?

"How can reading to a dog help?"

"Dogs in the library, what a mess!"

"Dogs are not that well behaved to be in the library"

"People have allergies"

#### Dissenters and Responses

#### Dogs are messy

- All therapy dogs must be groomed before visits.
- Handlers are required to bring a blanket or rug for dogs to sit on or the library may provide this.

#### Dissenters and Responses

#### Allergies in the library

- Yes, some are allergic to dogs. Depending on the dog breed, some are less likely to cause allergies.
- Inform parents of dog reading days so that they can avoid visiting the library on these days.

#### Dissenters and Responses

#### **Bad Behavior**

- Therapy dogs are tested to ensure that the dog's temperament
- Dogs who are certified, carry an insurance policy

#### Why Dogs?

- Dogs provide an uncritical audience, boosting children's reading confidence.
- Children feel safe and reassured cuddled up with a dog. This makes a great environment for reading.

## Why Dogs?

 Kids love being with dogs. When they read to a dog, that positive emotion becomes associated with reading.

 Knowing a dog friend is waiting for them provides an incentive to make regular visits to the library.

## Benefits to Reading

 Make reading fun and kids will learn to read.

 Positive effect on children with attention difficulties, disruptive behavior, and a lack of interest in reading.

#### Why Dogs

When asked who they talk to when they get upset, children respond . . .

A Pet!

#### Benefits of Therapy Dogs

In Hospitals:

Patients who refuse to speak, will talk to dogs

Patients who do not move, will reach for dogs

#### Physical Benefits

## **Chemistry Changes:**

 Increased levels of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers, while levels of cortisol, a stress and arousal hormone, dropped.

## Physical Changes

- Lower Blood Pressure
- Lower Heart Rate
- Lower Anxiety

#### Getting Started

 Interest in Participating in Therapy Dog Program

Tips for Staff

Orientation for Volunteers

## Things to Consider

- Ensure that all dogs participating are certified Therapy Dogs. The organization that they belong to provides an insurance policy.
- Planning the best time for the program.
   Afternoons, after school is best, unless you are promoting to Homeschoolers.

#### It's All In the Name

- Read to Your Breed
- PAWS to Read
- Pawsitive Reading with Therapy Dogs
- Tail Waggin' Tutors
- Read to Rover

#### Where to Find Dogs

These are some, but not all organizations that certify dogs

- www.deltasociety.org Delta Society
- www.therapydogs.com Therapy Dogs, Inc
- www.loveonaleash.org Love on a Leash
- www.tdi-dog.org Therapy Dogs International

## To Sign Up or Not Sign Up

- Some libraries prefer an informal drop in method, while other prefer to have signups.
- Sign ups can be done in advance of the day or children can pick up a ticket with their reading time on the day of the program.

## To Sign Up or Not to Sign Up

- Pros
  - Helps limit the number of kids trying to read to the dog at one time

 Give the kids ownership of a time and they are more likely to return, especially with a reminder call.

## To Sign up or not to sign up

- Cons
  - Some will cancel or not show up which leaves the dog with no one to read.

A little more work with keeping up the sign up and reminder call.

#### Incentives Keep 'em Coming

 Kids get a free book for every 10 books that they read.

OR

Kids get a free book for every 10 visits.

#### Location, Location, Location

Well lit area

Private Area

Comfortable

#### Promotion

 To help maintain high attendance, promotion is key.

Work with your area schools.

#### La Mesa Library Read To Your Breed

- Kids sign up in advance to read to the dog for 15 minutes
- Staff call the kids to remind them about their reading time.
- Kids get a free book for every 10 books they read.

#### Reminder Card

Read to Your Breed at the San Diego County

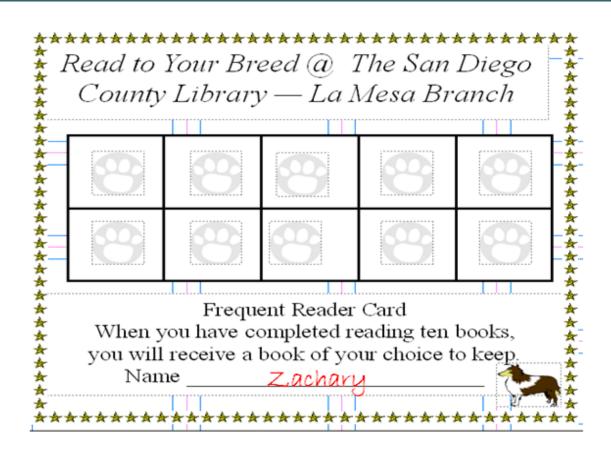
Library—La Mesa Branch

619 469.2151

<u>Zachary</u> is scheduled to read to <u>Sunny</u>

Wed, Oct 28th at 4:00 pm

#### Frequent Reader Card



#### Lakeside PAWS to Read

 Children are encouraged to sign up, but we also accept drop ins

 Kids get a free book for every five books they read

#### Frequent Reader Card

# P 38 WS To Read

Read 5 books to one of our therapy dogs and earn a free book to keep!

	Readers Name: _M	arisela
	T read one book to	Date
		bate
_		Date
		Date
	I read one book to _	Date

Improve your reading skills by reading to a friendly dog, every Friday at 3:30, at Lakeside Library.



Call the library to sign up and get more information. 619-443-1811 Lakeside Library 9839 Vine St, Lakeside CA 92040

#### Reverse side of card

# P 38 WS To Read

Read 5 books to one of our therapy dogs and earn a free book to keep!

Young readers can improve their reading skills by reading to a friendly dog, every Friday at 3:30, at Lakeside Library. Call the library to sign up and get more information. 619-443-1811



Lakeside Library 9839 Vine St, Lakeside CA 92040

## Final Thoughts

"I think we're just at the tip of the iceberg in terms of what we know about the human-animal bond and its potential health benefits. This area is primed for a lot of research that still needs to be done."

-from NIH News in Health (February 2009)

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